1549

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Woman's Board of Missions,

704 Congregational House,

Boston.

The Why and Wherefore of the Junior Auxiliary.

BY

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BOSTON:

FRANK WOOD, PRINTER, 352 WASHINGTON STREET.

1898.

THE WHY AND WHEREFORE OF THE JUNIOR AUXILIARY.

BY MISS KATE G. LAMSON.

It has been a glory of our own as well as of kindred Boards, that a host of young people and children were being systematically trained in the grand cycle of its organization to understand their personal responsibility toward the work, and to shoulder that responsibility conscientiously and intelligently. To most of us the "reason for being" of our young ladies societies is too apparent to need reviewing; but, perhaps, to look over the ground afresh will do none of us harm, while it may help us to answer the objections raised by that somewhat superficial, short-sighted thinker whom we all have an occasional experience of meeting.

On the part of the older friends of the work we seldom hear criticism of the Junior Auxiliary on more than one ground. They believe their daughters should have this most important factor in their education, they know the value of its influence in shaping and developing character; "but why," they ask, "cannot the girls come into our ladies' auxiliary, where we need so sadly the inspiration of their enthusaism? Can they not receive their training there?" To this we answer with an emphatic no. The chances are that your girls will never come at all into the society officered by their mothers and aunts, because they will have a natural feeling that they do not

belong there. But even if they should be coaxed or driven into it, it will be to take the seat in the farthest corner, to be as unobtrusive as possible, while older and wiser heads carry through the programme of the hour. Or, supposing a point more to have been gained, and her share in the work of the organization to have been assumed by a girl, will not all her efforts be aimed at obliterating spontaneity, and comforming as exactly as possible to the well-formed methods of her elders? Now, this is not altogether the end and aim of our desires for these fresh young lives springing up in our midst.

What, then, is the result of an organization of the girls, by the girls, for the girls? In the first place they will feel the charm of a society all their own. Some wise fathers, when their daughters arrive at an age to understand the nature of a trust, make over to them a small amount of invested property, in order that they may learn the value of money and the proper management of it. They do not expect their own example as able business men to do the work of training their daughters, so that they shall themselves be competent to handle their own affairs when need arises; nothing but personal experience will do this, and they know it. Moreover they realize the increase of self-respect, as well as the feeling of pride of ownership, which comes to a girl who has something to call her very own. If this be true in business interests, why not equally so in those which directly concern

the growth and expansion of the moral and spiritual life? The girls' own missionary society will appeal to their powers of leadership, of marshalling forces, of planning and executing campaigns. There will be no mothers or older friends to do it all for them, but only to stand behind them with ready sympathy and advice. Since all that is done must be done by the girls, they will have a pride in seeing that something is accomplished. Who can measure the developing power of responsibility? It calls out every faculty, and tests it to the utmost.

Another argument sometimes advanced against the formation of a Junior Auxiliary is, that there are too many societies already in the church. One answer should quiet this objection in the heart of every Christian: if there is no society in your church which is training your young ladies to positive, aggressive, intelligent participation in foreign missionary work, you have one too few, even though the name of other existing organizations be legion.

"But there is not money enough to support so many," you say. There is money enough to go to waste in every Christian community of our land. Redeem that for Christ, and even cut short the outlay for some things, good in themselves until you hold them up beside this other interest, the value of a hobby offset against the value of a soul. Money enough? There is too much money, not too little. It is because our souls have so delighted them-

selves in the fatness of things temporal, that they have only apathy left for the contemplation of things eternal. It is pleasant and easy to fall asleep on the enchanted ground, but it is fatal.

An objection much like the foregoing refers to the lack of time for a missionary society among the girls. They have their studies, some home duties, the needful exercise, none of which can be interfered with, certainly. Add to these their social engagements, their painting, their music, their lecture courses and clubs, as soon as they escape from the routine of school life, their dancing lessons, their French and their German, what wonder they have no time; and are we so sure these last may not be interfered with? We are in danger of coveting for our daughters every grace, every accomplishment our nineteenth century civilization can give except that matchless, unsurpassed grace of a heart in harmony with God; that accomplishment of a life set to following closely after Him who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Having then, as we hope, proved the right to existence for our Junior Auxiliaries, let us set ourselves to consider what should be their relation toward the Senior Auxiliaries. To reply fully involves negative as well as positive statements. They should not be rivals except as they serve to stimulate one another to good works. There should never be any feeling on the

part of the Juniors that the Seniors are old fogy, and cannot appreciate their aims for their society; nor on the part of the Seniors that the Juniors carry all before them, and "it is of no use for us older ones to try to do anything." The Junior Auxiliary should be the preparatory school for the Senior Auxiliary; the West Point of the army of Christian volunteers who are doing service under the banner of the cross against the hosts of sin. Let the older workers show their appreciation of the younger by asking them to render some service in their meetings from time to time; by opening their houses now and then to the girls for a meeting; by turning to them confidently for co-operation when the Board sends its urgent calls for advance all along the line; by having an occasional conference of executive committees. Let the Juniors meet all these advances half way; let them seek the advice of those who have worked so long and accomplished so much. Furthermore, let there be no reluctance on the part of any to promote those who have served their time in the younger society to the ranks of the older. It should be a natural process of growth, not a case of forcible ejection on one side, or of unwilling reception on the other. Try regular graduation exercises. A girl stands with regret at the end of her school life, but she would be mortified if school days were to last always for her, and she goes out to larger activities, proud that she is counted worthy to enter upon them.

Eliminate the young people from our homes, and what have we left? Old men and women and little children. Will these last bound at once from childhood into advanced mature life? Nothing in God's world grows in that way. Little by little, with experiments which are sometimes failures and sometimes successes, with a growth which is the result of many forces, seen and unseen, known and unknown, the child develops and is lost sight of in the youth in whom we live our own lives over again. It keeps us fresh and young; we help it to grow symmetrical and beautiful. God knows that either one without the other would be a mockery, an impossibility. May we who have seen the worth of lives fashioned after that of the Saviour of a lost world, aim that "our daughters shall be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."